

pp2A 3 categorizing the transaction tendencies into at least two categories and indicating different commodity information by a combination of the transaction tendencies; and deciding on the commodity information for each of the target customers by referring to the tendency matrix table based on the transaction tendencies analyzed in the analyzing.--

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, the title, specification and claims 1-21 have been amended. Claims 22-27 have been added. Claims 1-27 are pending and under consideration.

In paragraph 1, on page 2 of the Office Action, the title is objected to as not being descriptive. The title has been amended to obviate the objection. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the title is respectfully requested.

In paragraph 2, on page 2 of the Office Action, the specification is objected to as not including a reference to the priority document. The specification has been amended to obviate the objection. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the specification is respectfully requested.

In paragraph 2, on page 2 of the Office Action, Applicant's claim for foreign priority is denied. Applicant properly filed a certified copy of the priority document. It is highly unusual, and burdensome on the Applicant to force a certified English copy of the priority document to be filed. Applicant respectfully points out that the applied reference predates the priority document, and would therefore be unaffected by the translation. Applicant respectfully requests the reconsideration and withdrawal of the denial.

In paragraph 5, on page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) for being anticipated by Deaton et al. (Deaton), U.S. Patent No. 5,649,114. The rejection is respectfully traversed. In order for a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 to be upheld, the cited reference must teach each and every feature of the claimed invention. Deaton does not do so.

The explicit object of Deaton is to provide a system for customer promotion, which facilitates transactions by reducing the requirements for customer identification, enables a store to adopt a risk management approach to credit verification based on a customer's transactional history, and improves a store's marketing and other customer relations programs by collecting transactional data for that store, both current and historical, that can be used to identify new or infrequent customers, develop customer profiles and to perform targeted marketing (see

column 4, lines 52-61). Also, the Examiner states that a system of Deaton provides selective incentives to a customer.

In contrast, the explicit object of the present invention is to provide an information decision apparatus, a method thereof and a recording medium thereof for analyzing a customer's purchasing tendencies from the customer's purchasing history; finding only potential customers who may replace their current products with new products models; and making a decision to offer suitable products to the customers (see application on page 3, lines 5-13).

In order to find a product to be replaced with a promoting product that may be a new product or a used product, the information decision, as recited in claim 1, and shown in one preferred embodiment in the specification as apparatus 100, includes a replacement product finder (see step S1 in Fig. 7, and Fig. 8 and page 13, lines 20-31) for finding a product to be replaced based on product specification information specifying a promoting product. Moreover, in order to find a target customer having the product to be replaced with the promoting product, the information decision apparatus 100 includes a target customer finder (see step S2 in Fig. 7, and page 11, line 34, to page 12, line 9) for finding a target customer who purchased the product to be replaced, based on transaction histories of a plurality of customers. Furthermore, in order to introduce the promoting product with product introduction information based on the transaction tendencies of the target customer, the information decision apparatus 100 includes a transaction tendencies analyzer (see step S3 in Fig. 7 and page 12, lines 16-33, and Fig. 9 and page 16, line 12, to page 17, line 36) for analyzing transaction tendencies of said target customer based on the transaction history of said target customer, and a determiner (see step S4 in Fig. 7 step S308 in Fig. 9 and page 17, line 37 to page 18, line 13) for deciding on product introduction information that fits the transaction tendencies of said target customer analyzed by the transaction tendencies analyzer, so as to introduce a promoting product to replace said product of said target customer.

Thus, the information decision apparatus as recited by claim 1, processes information based on entered product specification information specifying a promoting product, but not based on some predetermined criteria taught by Deaton. Also, the information decision apparatus of the invention is not related to the point-of-sale marketing. Therefore Deaton can neither teach nor anticipate "a target customer finder that finds a target customer who purchased said product to be replaced, based on transaction histories of a plurality of customers " as recited in claim 1.

Further, in order to analyze transaction tendencies for each of the target customers whom a product manufacture wants to introduce a promoting product, the information decision apparatus recited in claim 9, and shown in one preferred embodiment in the specification as apparatus 100, includes a target customer finder (see step S2 in Fig. 7, and page 11, line 34 to page 12, line 9) that finds target customers who purchased a product that is a lower level than a promoting product; and a transaction tendencies analyzer (see step S3 in Fig. 7 and page 12, lines 16-33, and Fig. 9 and page 16, line 12, page 17 to line 36) that analyzes transaction tendencies based on a transaction history for each of the target customers. In order to decide product information suitable for each target customer, the information decision apparatus 100 includes a tendency matrix table (see 4d in Fig. 5, page 9, lines 15-26, and page 17, line 37 to page 18, line 14) for categorizing the transaction tendencies into at least two categories and indicating different product information by a combination of the transaction tendencies; and an information determiner that determines the product information for each of said target customers by referring to the tendency matrix table based on the transaction tendencies analyzed by the transaction tendencies analyzing part.

Thus, the information decision apparatus as recited by claim 9 is not related to selective incentives and a customer as taught by Deaton. In addition, Deaton does not disclose the tendency matrix table used to decide the product information for each target customer. Hence, Deaton can neither teach nor anticipate “a tendency matrix table that categorizes the transaction tendencies into at least two categories and indicates different product information by a combination of the transaction tendencies “ as recited in claim 9.

Dependent claims 10, 15, 16 and 21 are allowable for reasons similar to those discussed above in relation to independent claims 1 and 9. Claims 2-9, 11-14 and 17-20 are allowable as depending on claims 1, 10 and 16, as well as for the additional features recited therein.

Claims 22-27 are allowable for reasons similar to those discussed above in relation to claims 1 and 9. Prompt consideration and allowance are earnestly requested.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE TITLE:

Please REPLACE the TITLE OF THE INVENTION with the following: -- INFORMATION DECISION APPARATUS SPECIFYING CUSTOMERS AND DECIDING APPROPRIATE INFORMATION FOR CUSTOMERS TO PROMOTE A PRODUCT, METHOD THEREOF AND COMPUTER-READABLE RECORDING MEDIUM THEREOF --.

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please AMEND the SPECIFICATION beginning at page 1, line 1, to ADD the following:

This application is related to and claims priority to the Japanese application entitled INFORMATION DECISION APPARATUS, METHOD THEREOF AND COMPUTER-READABLE RECORDING MEDIUM THEREOF having serial number 10-355046, filed December 14, 1998 and incorporated by reference herein.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please AMEND the following claims:

1. (ONCE AMENDED) An information decision apparatus, comprising:
a replacement product finder that finds a product to be replaced based on product specification information specifying a promotion product;
a target customer finder that finds a target customer who purchased the product to be replaced, based on transaction histories of a plurality of customers;
a transaction tendencies [analyzing part for analyzing transactor's] analyzer that analyzes transaction tendencies of the target customer based on [a transactor's] the transaction history of the target customer; and
[an information decision part for deciding on appropriate] a determiner that determines product introduction information that fits the [transactor's] transaction tendencies of the target customer analyzed by the transaction tendencies [analyzing part] analyzer, so as to introduce a promoting product to replace said product of the target customer.
2. (ONCE AMENDED) The information decision apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said transaction tendencies [analyzing part] analyzer further comprises a transaction tendencies [decision part for deciding on] determiner that determines at least one [transactor's] transaction tendency of the target customer in accordance with at least one product type listed

in the [transactor's] transaction history of the target customer.

3. (ONCE AMENDED) The information decision apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said transaction tendencies [analyzing part] analyzer further comprises:

a product type conversion table [for converting] that converts a product type into at least one [transactor's] transaction tendency of the target customer, [and] where said product type conversion table [being] is recorded in a recording medium; and

a transaction tendencies [decision part for deciding on] determiner that determines at least one [transactor's] transaction tendency of the target customer by converting at least one product type listed in the [transactor's] transaction history of the target customer by using the product type conversion table.

4. (ONCE AMENDED) The information decision apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said transaction tendencies [analyzing part] analyzer further comprises a transaction tendencies [decision part for deciding on] determiner that determines at least one [transactor's] of the target customer transaction tendency in accordance with at least one product rank listed in the [transactor's] transaction history of the target customer.

5. (ONCE AMENDED) The information decision apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said transaction tendencies [analyzing part] analyzer further comprises;

a product rank conversion table [for converting] that converts a product rank into at least one [transactor's] transaction tendency of the target customer, and said product rank and conversion table [being] are recorded in a recording medium; and

a transaction tendencies [decision part for deciding on] determiner that determines at least one product rank listed in the [transactor's] transaction history of the target customer by using the product rank conversion table.

6. (ONCE AMENDED) The information decision apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said [information decision part] determiner further comprises:

a first transaction tendencies [decision part for deciding on] determiner that determines at least one [transactor's] transaction tendency of the target customer in accordance with at least one product type listed in a [transactor's] transaction history of the target customer; and

a second transaction tendencies [decision part for deciding on] determiner that

determines at least one [transactor's] transaction tendency of the target customer in accordance with at least one product rank listed in the [transactor's] transaction history of the target customer; and

[an] said [information decision part for deciding] determiner decides on [appropriate] product introduction information that fits the [transactor's] tendencies of the target customer based on the [transactor's] transaction tendencies of the target customer decided by the first transaction tendencies decision part and the second transaction tendencies decision part.

7. (ONCE AMENDED) The information decision apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein [said decided-on appropriate] the product introduction information is used to promote [new] used products that fit the [transactor's] tendencies of the target customer.

8. (ONCE AMENDED) The information decision apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein [said decided-on appropriate] the product introduction information is used to promote used products that fit the [transactor's] tendencies of the target customer.

9. (ONCE AMENDED) An information decision apparatus, comprising:
a target [transactor finding part for finding] customer finder that finds target [transactor] customers [in accordance with information of at least one] who purchased a product that is a lower level than a promoting product;

a transaction tendencies [analyzing part for analyzing transactor's] analyzer that analyzes transaction tendencies based on a [transactor's] transaction history for each of the target [transactors] customers; [and]

a tendency matrix table that categorizes the transaction tendencies into at least two categories and indicates different product information by a combination of the transaction tendencies; and

an information [decision part for deciding on appropriate] determiner that determines the product information [that fits the transactor's] for each of the target customers by referring to the tendency matrix table based on the transaction tendencies analyzed by the transaction tendencies [analyzing part] analyzer.

10. (ONCE AMENDED) A method of information decision, comprising [the steps of]:

finding a product to be replaced based on product specification information specifying a promoting product;

finding a target customer who purchased said product to be replaced, based on transaction histories of a plurality of customers;

[(a)] analyzing [transactor's] transaction tendencies of the target customer based on a [transactor's] transaction history of the target customer; and

[(b)] deciding on [appropriate] product introduction information that fits the [transactor's] transaction tendencies of the target customer analyzed in [the step (a)] analyzing, so as to introduce a promoting product to replace said product of the target customer.

11. (ONCE AMENDED) The method as claimed in claim 10, wherein [said step (a)] the analyzing further comprises [the steps of]:

[(l)] deciding on at least one [transactor's] transaction tendency of the target customer in accordance with at least one product type listed in a [transactor's] transaction history of the target customer; and

[(m)] deciding on at least one [transactor's] transaction tendency of the target customer in accordance with at least one product rank listed in the [transactor's] transaction history of the target customer.

12. (ONCE AMENDED) The method as claimed in claim 10, wherein [the step (a)] the analyzing further comprises [the steps of]:

[(l)] deciding on at least one [transactor's] transaction tendency of the target customer in accordance with at least one product type listed in a [transactor's] transaction history of the target customer; and

[(m)] deciding on at least one more [transactor's] transaction tendency of the target customer in accordance with at least one product rank listed in the [transactor's] transaction history of the target customer, and wherein said [step (b)] finding said target customer further comprises [the steps of]:

[(n)] deciding [on appropriate] product introduction information that fits the [transactor's] tendencies of the target customer based on the [transactor's] transaction tendencies of the target customer decided in [the steps (l) and (m)] said deciding on said transaction tendencies.

13. (ONCE AMENDED) The method as claimed in claim 10, wherein [said decided-

on appropriate] the product introduction information is used to promote new products that fit the [transactor's] transaction tendencies of the target customer.

14. (ONCE AMENDED) The method as claimed in claim 10, wherein [said decided-on appropriate] the product introduction information is used to promote used products that fit the [transactor's] transaction tendencies of the target customer.

15. (ONCE AMENDED) A method of information decision comprising [the steps of]:
[(a)] finding target [transactors] customers [in accordance with information of at least one] who purchased a product being at a lower level than a promoting product;
[(b)] analyzing [transactor's] transaction tendencies based on a [transactor's] transaction history for each of the target [transactors] customers; [and]
[(c)] categorizing the transaction tendencies into at least two categories and indicating different product information by a combination of the transaction tendencies; and
[(c)] deciding on [appropriate] the product information for each of the target customers by referring to a tendency matrix table [that fits the transactor's] based on the transaction tendencies analyzed in [the step (b)] said analyzing.

16. (ONCE AMENDED) A computer-readable recording medium recorded with a program for causing a computer to make [information] a decision, said program comprising [the codes of]:

[(a)] finding a product to be replaced based on product specification information specifying a promoting product;

finding a target customer who purchased said product to be replaced, based on transaction histories of a plurality of customers;

analyzing [transactor's] transaction tendencies of the target customer based on a [transactor's] transaction history of said target customer; and

[(b)] deciding on [appropriate] product introduction information that fits the [transactor's] transaction tendencies of the target customer analyzed in the [code (a)] analyzing, so as to introduce a promoting product to replace the product of the target customer.

17. (ONCE AMENDED) The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 16, wherein the [code (a)] analyzing further comprises [the codes of]:

[(l)] deciding on a least one [transactor's] transaction tendency of the target customer in accordance with at least one product type listed in a [transactor's] transaction history of the target customer; and

[(m)] deciding on at least one [transactor's] transaction tendency of the target customer in accordance with at least one product rank listed in the [transactor's] transaction history of the target customer.

18. (ONCE AMENDED) The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 16, wherein the [code (a)] analyzing further comprises [the codes of]:

[(l)] deciding on at least one [transactor's] transaction tendency of the target customer in accordance with at least one product type listed in a [transactor's] transaction history of the target customer; and

[(m)] deciding on at least one more [transactor's] transaction tendency of the target customer in accordance with at least one product rank listed in the [transactor's] transaction history of the target customer, and wherein the [code (b)] finding a target customer further comprises [the codes of]:

[(n)] deciding on [appropriate] product introduction information that fits the [transactor's] tendencies based on the [transactor's] transaction tendencies of the target customer decided by the [codes (l) and (m)] said deciding on said transaction tendencies.

19. (ONCE AMENDED) The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 16, wherein [said decided-on appropriate] the product introduction information is used to promote new products that fit the [transactor's] transaction tendencies of the target customer.

20. (ONCE AMENDED) The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 16, wherein said [decided-on appropriate] product introduction information is used to promote used products that fit the [transactor's] transaction tendencies of the target customer.

21. (ONCE AMENDED) A computer-readable recording medium recorded with a program for causing a computer make information decision, said program comprising [the codes of]:

[(a)] finding target [transactors] customers [in accordance with information of at least one] who purchased a product being a lower level than a promoting product;

[(b)] analyzing [transactor's] transaction tendencies based on a [transactor's] transaction history for each of the target [transactors] customers; [and] categorizing the transaction tendencies into at least two categories and indicating different product information by a combination of the transaction tendencies; and [(c)] deciding on [appropriate] the product information for each of said target customers by referring to a tendency matrix table [that fits the transactor's] based on the transaction tendencies analyzed by the [code (b)] analyzing.

Please ADD the following claims:

--22. (NEW) An information decision apparatus, comprising:
a replacement commodity finder that finds a commodity to be replaced based on commodity specification information that specifies a promoting commodity;
a target customer finder that finds a target customer who purchased the commodity to be replaced, based on transaction histories of a plurality of customers;
a transaction tendencies analyzer that analyzes transaction tendencies of the target customer based on the transaction history of the target customer; and
a determiner that determines a commodity introduction information that fits the transaction tendencies of the target customer analyzed by the transaction tendencies analyzer, so as to introduce a promoting commodity to replace the commodity of the target customer.

23. (NEW) An information decision apparatus, comprising:
a target customer finder that finds target customers who purchased a commodity being a lower level than a promoting commodity;
a transaction tendencies analyzer that analyzes transaction tendencies based on a transaction history for each of the target customers;
a tendency matrix table that categorizes the transaction tendencies into at least two categories and indicating different commodity information by a combination of the transaction tendencies; and
an information decision part that decides on the commodity information for each of the target customers by referring to the tendency matrix table based on the transaction tendencies analyzed by the transaction tendencies analyzer.

24. (NEW) A method of information decision, comprising:

finding a commodity to be replaced based on commodity specification information specifying a promoting commodity;

finding a target customer who purchased the commodity to be replaced, based on transaction histories of a plurality of customers;

analyzing transaction tendencies of the target customer based on a transaction history of the target customer; and

deciding on commodity introduction that fits the transaction tendencies of the target customer analyzed in the analyzing, so as to introduce a promoting commodity to replace the commodity of the target customer.

25. (NEW) A method of information decision, comprising:

finding target customers who purchased a commodity being a lower level than a promoting commodity;

analyzing transaction tendencies based on a transaction history for each of the target customers;

categorizing the transaction tendencies into at least two categories and indicating different commodity information by a combination of the transaction tendencies; and

deciding on the commodity information for each of the target customers by referring to the tendency matrix table based on the transaction tendencies analyzed in the analyzing.

26. (NEW) A computer-readable recording medium recorded with a program that causes a computer to make an information decision, comprising:

finding a commodity to be replaced based on commodity specification information specifying a promoting commodity;

finding a target customer who purchased the commodity to be replaced, based on transaction histories of a plurality of customers;

analyzing transaction tendencies of the target customer based on a transaction history of the target customer; and

deciding on commodity introduction that fits the transaction tendencies of the target customer analyzed in the analyzing, so as to introduce a promoting commodity to replace the commodity of the target customer.

27. (NEW) A computer-readable recording medium recorded with a program that

causes a computer to make an information decision, comprising:

finding target customers who purchased a commodity at a lower level than a promoting commodity;

analyzing transaction tendencies based on a transaction history for each of the target customers;

categorizing the transaction tendencies into at least two categories and indicating different commodity information by a combination of the transaction tendencies; and

deciding on the commodity information for each of the target customers by referring to the tendency matrix table based on the transaction tendencies analyzed in the analyzing.--